A

PROPOSAL

To the HONOURABLE

House of Commons,

For Raising above

Half a Million of Money *per Annum*,

For the Service of the

GOVERNMENT,

With great Ease to the *Subject*,

BY A

TAX

UPON

SIGNS.

LONDON:

Printed for the AUTHOUR. 1694.

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A PROPOSAL FOR A TAX UPON SIGNS, &c.

THAT all *Taverns*, *Inns*, — *Ordinaries*, *Victualling-Houses*, *Coffee-Houses*, *Cooks-Shops*, and other Houſes of *Publick Entertainment*: As alſo, all *Traders* or *Shop-keepers*, in His Majeſty's Kingdom of *England*, Dominion of *Wales*, and Town of *Berwick* upon *Tweed*, ſhall for One Year (or for as many as this Honourable Houſe thinks fit) pay reſpectively ſuch a TAX, as followeth.

Imprimis, That all *Taverns*, *Inns*, and *Ordinaries*, (in regard of the great Eſtates that are ſuddenly got by ſome that keep them) a *Tax* to be laid upon the Maſter or Miſtreſs thereof, throughout the Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*, for their Sign, *One Pound per Annum*.

Secondly, That all *Taverns* and *Inns* in all the Roads in *England*, *Wales*, and *Berwick* upon *Tweed*, (except those that Quarter Souldiers, to pay only for the time they are freed from them) especially where *Stage-Coaches* come to; and all Noted Houses where Gentlemen-Travellers commonly Resort for best Entertainment, but very frequently are unconscionably exacted on, *Pay One Pound per Annum.*

Thirdly, That all *Taverns* and *Inns*, in all Cities, Towns, and Villages, *Pay Fifteen Shillings per Annum.*

Fourthly, That all *Victualling-Houses*, *Coffee-Houses*, *Cook-Shops*, and other Houses of Publick Entertainment, within the Cities of *London* and *Westminster*, *Pay Ten Shillings per Annum.*

Fifthly, That all *Taverns* and *Inns* in the Suburbs of *London*, *Pay Fifteen Shillings per Annum.*

Sixthly, That all *Victualling-Houses*, *Coffee-Houses*, *Cook-Shops*, and other Houses of Publick Entertainment in the Suburbs, pay for their **Sign**, *Eight Shillings per Annum.*

Next, That a Tax be laid upon all Traders or Shopkeepers in his Majesty's Kingdom of England, Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick upon Tweed, for their Signs, viz.

First, That every *Merchant*, *Goldsmith*, *Mercer*, *Grocer*, *Apothecary*, *Drugster*, *Woolen-Draper*, *Linnen-Draper*, and other of the chiefest Traders or Shopkeepers in *London*, *Westminster*, and *Suburbs*, pay for their **Sign**, *One Pound per Annum.*

Secondly, That upon all the **Signs**, of what Trade soever, in *Westminster-Hall*, and within both the *Old* and *New-Exchanges*, and others within the City, there be laid a **Tax** of *Ten Shillings per Annum.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That all Handicraft Trades, and those of an inferiour Occupation, within *London*, *Westminster*, and *Suburbs*, *Pay Five Shillings per Annum.*

Fourthly, That all Traders or Shop-keepers whatsoever, throughout all Cities and Towns in *England*, *Wales*, and *Berwick* upon *Tweed*, (except *London* and *Westminster*,) *Pay* for their Sign, *Five Shillings per Annum.*

Fifthly, That all Shop-keepers throughout all Villages, *Pay Two Shillings Six-pence per Annum.*

Or to be laid thus,

By reason it is too tedious to Enumerate the Trades of all Shop-keepers throughout City and Country, and so Tax every Man according to the Quality and Inequality of his Trade; which besides might breed a dispute, That one Trade, tho inferiour to another, bears as great or larger Product at the Years end, and so is liable to pay more or equal. It is therefore humbly conceiv'd, (to prevent that Cavil) that instead of Taxing every particular Trade, according to the Merit of it, Every Tradesman or Shop-keeper to be Taxed for his Sign according to the Annual Rent he pays for his House and Shop, or Shop alone, *viz.*

First, That every Tradesman or Shop-keeper throughout *London* and *Westminster*, that pays an Annual Rent of Forty Pound a Year or upwards for his House and Shop, to pay for his Sign, *One Pound per Annum.*

Secondly, That every Tradesman or Shop-keeper, that pays an Annual Rent of Thirty Pound, to Pay *Fifteen Shillings per Annum.*

Thirdly

Thirdly, That all who pay an Annual Rent of Twenty Pounds, to pay *Ten Shillings per Annum*, and ſo downwards proportionably, and for any Rent betwixt thoſe Nominated.

Fourthly, That every Tradeſman or Shop-keeper, throughout *England*, *Wales*, and *Berwick* upon *Tweed*, that pays an Annual Rent of Ten Pounds, or upwards, to Pay *Five Shillings per Annum*.

Fifthly, That all who pay an Annual Rent of Five Pounds, to pay *Two Shillings Six-pence per Annum*, and ſo proportionably for a greater or leſſer Rent.

Now, in regard there are many great Traders and Dealers in the Country, as well as in the City, who have no Signs, (but eſpecially the former) nor Shops, but Warehouſes only, its requiſite, leſt any Objection ſhould ariſe, that they pay according to the Rate of the Tax laid upon thoſe who have Shops and Signs.

And further, That in caſe this Honourable Houſe ſhall think fit to lay this Tax, it is probable, that ſome Perſons, thinking to avoid Paying, will pull down their Signs; which if it ſhould ſo happen, and true Information given thereof to ſuch Officer or Officers as ſhall be appointed to inſpect the Annual Rent of ſuch Houſes and Shops, as are within their reſpective Precincts, ſuch Perſon or Perſons to pay double the Tax laid on them; or otherwiſe, to pay the ſame Rate (after ſuch Diſcovery) with thoſe that have Signs, as aforeſaid.

And by reaſon His Majeſty's extraordinary Occaſions require a ſpeedy ſupply, if this Honourable Houſe ſhall think fit, The Tax laid upon Taverns, Inns, *&c.* may be gathered Quarterly by the Officers of the Excise, and managed by the Commiſſioners, without any Charge to the King: And

other

other Officers appointed in every City and chief Town, to receive the **Tax** laid upon Tradesmen or Shop-keepers, which in one Year, will bring in above half a Million of Money *per Annum* to His Majesty, and may, for the future, disburthen the **Land Tax**. And as it will in a manner be insensibly felt by those its laid upon, so it may be continued as long as is needful, for supplying what is Deficient in carrying on the War against *France*.

All which is most humbly submitted to,

By J. W.

By the Books of the *Hearth-Money* it appears there were Thirteen Hundred Thousand Houses.

By Increase of Buildings since, above Two Hundred Thousand Houses more.

In all 1500000 Houses.

Computing then Two Thirds of that Sum *Publick-Houses*, *Shop-keepers*, and *Traders*, at Ten Shillings a **Sign** *per Annum*, one with another, subject to this Payment, will Raise, by a modest Computation, above *Half a Million per Annum*.

☞ NOTE, That if it should be Objected, That a TAX is lately charg'd upon Houses for their Windows, and so may be thought too severe to lay a double TAX on them for their SIGNS: It is humbly Answered, That what hath been Proposed, is not intended for a further *Tax* upon Houses, but by taking an Account of the Annual Rent that is paid for them, a better Estimate may be given of the Value of that Trade: For its to be supposed, by how much the more Rent they sit at, the greater the quality and income of the Trade must be: So that the Trading Shop keeper, for the Sign he puts forth, is chiefly meant by what is here Offered.